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Molotov Cocktail Attack on Chita Government Buildings

By The Moscow Times

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Chita firefighters putting out the blaze at the building in the Central Administrative District.

Unidentified culprits hurled Molotov cocktails through the windows of several government buildings in the far eastern city of Chita on Friday, regional officials said.

Fires flared up almost simultaneously in three facilities used by the regional Investigative Committee, the city police department and the Ingodinsky district's security department, the regional police and investigative departments said.

The fires were swiftly extinguished and the buildings sustained only minor damage, the agencies said, Interfax reported.

"Investigators are working with two explanations of the arson — a diversion created for an attack on other agency facilities or intimidation of investigators by organized criminal gangs," a spokesman for the regional Investigative Committee said.

Shortly after the incident, investigators sent out video recordings to local media organizations that show a young man flinging petrol bombs into the investigative department's building.

An investigative team is currently examining the crime scenes while forensics experts inspect fragments of the bottles used.

Documents relating to criminal cases and other important files have been removed from the investigative department's offices to make sure they are not damaged in the event of another attack.

A criminal case has been opened on charges of arson and premeditated hooliganism committed by a group.

Arson carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, while those found guilty of hooliganism directed against the authorities face up to seven years in prison.

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